



News Release

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For Release: May 18, 2011

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Refuge Announces Changes in Policy for Use of Public Access Roads.

Street-legal ATV's and motorcycles licensed by the State will be eligible for permit

Ajo, AZ - After careful consideration, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in southwestern Arizona will implement an objective from the Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) allowing street-legal motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATV) on three “public access roads” within the Refuge. Those roads, the El Camino del Diablo, Christmas Pass, and Charlie Bell roads are outside of designated wilderness areas. No other roads or trails are open to motorized use.

To be eligible for access on these roads all motorcycles and ATV's must meet the State of Arizona requirements for being ‘street-legal’. State requirements for street-legal vehicles can be found at: www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/outdoor_recreation/ohv/atv_brochure.pdf

This action does not open the Refuge to unrestricted off-road vehicle activity. Only the three public access roads already open to 4x4 vehicles are open to street-legal motorcycles and ATV's. These vehicles must abide by the same rules and restrictions as all other vehicles that access the Refuge. Furthermore, permits for accessing these roads are required. To reduce impact of large caravans, an additional Special Use Permit is required for a party size of five or more vehicles traveling together or traveling in smaller groups but part of a larger organized event. This applies to all vehicles including motorcycles and ATVs.

This activity was directed in the 2007 CCP which was finalized after extensive public input and involvement over a seven year period. Specifically Objective 2 of Goal 3 in the final CCP states:

*Within one year of plan adoption implement new vehicle restrictions. Travel trailers will not be allowed on the refuge non-wilderness access roads due to concerns about visitor safety. **Licensed street-legal motorcycles and off road vehicles (as defined by the state of Arizona) will be permitted. . .***

Previous implementation of this objective has been precluded by higher priority objectives.

This action will bring the refuge in compliance with not only Federal regulations and the CCP, but provide consistency with Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, the Barry M. Goldwater Range, and Bureau of Land Management lands, as these adjoining Federal land management agencies all allow street-legal, state-licensed ATVs and motorcycles on public access roads.

A document outlining the rationale for this measure can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/arizona/cabeza/>.